



Jim Doyle
Governor

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HYDROLOGISTS AND SOIL SCIENTISTS**

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**EXAMINING BOARD OF PROFESSIONAL
GEOLOGISTS, HYDROLOGISTS AND
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**Licensure Required for Practice of
Geology, Hydrology, and Soil Science**

The members of the Wisconsin Examining Board of Professional Geologists, Hydrologists, and Soil Scientists continue their efforts to inform graduates of geology, soil science, and hydrology/water resources related programs that they are required by Wisconsin law to obtain licensure to practice in these fields.

The Board recently mailed the following information to several Wisconsin schools asking for their assistance in providing licensing information to students:

"Students who have attained second semester senior standing, and have 24 of the 30 semester hour credits required for licensure, are eligible to take the fundamentals examination. They may sit for the practice exam after they meet specific experience requirements; five years experience is required with a bachelor's degree and four years experience is required with a master's degree."

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Candidates are eligible for licensure after they have passed both the fundamentals and practice exams. Application materials for the geology exam can be obtained online at the exam provider's website:

www.cps.ca.gov/test_registration/wisc/index.asp.

Application materials for the hydrology exam can be obtained at www.aihydro.org.

For soil science exams, candidates must register with the Department.

More detailed licensing information can also be found in the Wisconsin Statutes and Administrative Codes, which are available on the Department of Regulation and Licensing website at www.drl.state.wi.us, under "Publications," "Administrative Code and Statute Information for Professions." Sections GHSS 2 through GHSS 4 of the Administrative Code provide specific education, examination and experience requirements for licensure in each professional field."

The Board believes that sharing this information with interested students and graduates will promote safe and effective practice in your professions. Please pass this information on to students and new members entering these professions.

Obtaining a Certificate of Authorization

A certificate of authorization can be obtained by submitting an application listing the names and addresses of the company's officers and directors, and all individuals in its employment licensed to practice professional geology, hydrology, or soil science. If any of this information changes, the change should be reported to the department within 30 days. Appropriate application materials can be obtained from the Department of Regulation and Licensing.

A certificate of authorization is not required for a public service company or its regular employees when their practice of professional geology, hydrology or soil science is exclusively in connection with the facilities of the company and the facilities are subject to regulation by a commission of the state or federal government.

A reminder that individuals who practice professional geology, hydrology, and soil

science must be licensed and if they practice on behalf of a firm, partnership, or corporation, the firm, partnership or corporation must have a certificate of authorization. A sole proprietorship does not require a certificate of authorization, although the proprietor must be licensed as an individual.

Current Licensing Statistics

Active licensees as of January 2003:

Professional Geologists: **967**
Professional Hydrologists: **173**
Professional Soil Scientists: **175**
Geology Firms: **39**
Hydrology Firms: **11**
Soil Science Firms: **12**

Professional Geologists and Continuing Education

The members of the Professional Geologists Section have often discussed continuing education requirements. As part of these discussions they have reviewed other state's requirements and considered the cost of administration, impact on licensees, and potential public health and safety benefits.

At this time, the Section members feel that the cost and difficulty of administering a continuing education program outweigh the potential benefits. The cost of program administration will be greatly reduced if a professional association begins to evaluate and certify courses and course providers. The Section plans to reconsider implementation of a continuing education program at that time.

Although the Section members are not currently pursuing mandatory continuing education, they would like to encourage professional geologists to take advantage of continuing education opportunities to further develop their professional skills and to stay current in the profession.

Formal courses and seminars are available at colleges, universities, training centers, on the Internet, and often short courses are offered at association conferences and meetings.

Florida Challenge of the Professional Geology Exam

A Florida exam candidate who failed the PG exam three times sued the Florida Geology Board. The Florida Board called upon the Association of State Geology Boards (ASBOG) to assist with defending the validity of the exam before an Administrative Law Judge.

Seventeen questions were challenged. For those 17 questions the judge required the state to provide written documentation, including cited references, showing that each correct answer was correct. They also had to provide documentation supporting the fact that each answer that was graded as being a wrong answer was, in fact, incorrect. The state prevailed on all 17 questions challenged. This process and the final outcome demonstrate that the exam is defensible in court and that the procedure used to develop the PG exam is sound.

How are the exams developed?

Under the guidance of two experts in exam construction and analysis, the ASBOG Council of Examiners (COE) spends two full days twice each year developing and evaluating exams. The Wisconsin Board almost always sends a representative, rotating among the professional members. David Mickelson, Vice Chair of the Geology Section, attended the COE session in November 2002.

Approximately 15 professional geologists from around the country focus on the fundamentals exam and another 15 are assigned to the practice exam. Every exam goes through two thorough analyses by the COE members after it has been constructed. In addition to preparing questions for the Fall 2003 exam, the teams of professional geologists take and critique each exam.

DRL Continues Examination Follow-Up with American Institute of Hydrology

The Department continued its work with the American Institute of Hydrology (AIH) on management and maintenance of quality hydrology licensing examinations at the AIH Annual Meeting held in October 2002 in Portland, Oregon. Darwin Tichenor of the Department's Office of Examinations

attended the meeting to consult with AIH officials on the status and maintenance of the examinations under AIH. The three current examinations are the fundamentals of hydrology, practice of groundwater hydrology, and practice of surface water hydrology. These examinations were developed by the Department in consultation with subject matter experts and AIH officials during 1998 and 1999, and were first administered by the Department in January of 2000. As planned during the examination development process, the examinations were turned over to AIH for management and administration, effective with the May 2002 examinations. The examinations are currently offered in May and November of each year by AIH.

At the 2002 Annual Meeting, Tichenor met with members of the AIH Committee for Professional Examinations to review examination questions, general examination content, and plans to maintain and expand the examinations. The Committee plans to meet each year at the AIH Annual Meeting to do a comprehensive review of the examinations, and work as needed between annual meetings to plan and develop questions and content for the examinations. The Committee is also currently at work to develop a water quality practice examination, which should be ready for administration in 2004. Longer term, the Committee is planning a national survey of hydrologists to use in updating the examination to the latest developments in hydrologic knowledge and practice.

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